

Identity judgements, work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating effects based on group engagement model



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HIGHLIGHTS

- This study is based on the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003).
- We find that both pride and respect are positively related to organizational identification, and then engagement and OCB.
- This study provides compelling support for the group engagement model in predicting key job attitudes and behaviors.

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ABSTRACT

The group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) suggests that organizational identification is based on both the individual's evaluation of the status of their group as perceived by outgroups (i.e., pride) and his/her view about their status within the group (i.e., respect). However, prior research has not examined the factors which influence organizational identification, and subsequently lead employees to feel engaged and exhibit positive extra-role behaviors that benefit the organization. Using time-lagged data from both service employees and their supervisors, our findings demonstrate that both pride and respect are positively related to organizational identification, and organizational identification is positively related to work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). More importantly, organizational identification mediates the relationships between the antecedents (i.e., pride and respect) and consequences (work engagement and OCB). Overall, the study provides compelling support for the group engagement model in predicting key job attitudes and behaviors amongst service employees.

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1. Introduction

Increasing competition in the hospitality industry has led service providers to focus on improving customer service quality, which has been shown to influence organizational performance through heightening customer satisfaction and loyalty (Briggs, Sutherland, & Drummond, 2007). In order to do this organizations have had to pay extra attention to the performance of service employees, because their interaction with customers, to a large extent, determines service quality (Yoon & Suh, 2003). However, organizations operating in the hospitality sector have found it difficult to attract and retain employees, as the sector has been

known for low wages, long working hours, high turnover, and poor employment conditions (Pienaar & Willemse, 2008). Researchers have begun to investigate the factors that may allow organizations to improve the work attitudes and behaviors of service employees including work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., Tsaur & Lin, 2004; Yen & Teng, 2013). For example, work engagement has been found to predict service employee performance, and therefore increase customer loyalty (Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). Citizenship behaviors are of particular importance in the hospitality industry, given the experiential and interactive nature of service provision and the active role played by service employees (Kim, Ok, & Lee, 2009). In prior research, service employees' citizenship behaviors have been found to strongly influence customers' experience and organizational success (Walz & Niehoff, 2000).

Given the importance of work engagement and citizenship behaviors of service employees, researchers have identified various

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antecedents of work engagement in the service industry, which include both contextual factors (e.g. job resources, see Salanova et al., 2005; Slåtten & Mehmetoglu, 2011), and psychological factors (e.g., psychological contract and tourism involvement, see Lu, Capezio, Restubog, Garcia, & Wang, 2016; Yeh, 2012, 2013). Similarly, citizenship behavior among service employees has also been found to be influenced by several psychological factors such as leader-member exchange (Kim et al., 2009), organizational commitment (Kim, Park, & Chang, 2011), and their psychological contract with the organization (Chen & Kao, 2012). Although the classic psychological model of attitude–behavior relations posited organizational identification (OI) as a basis for a variety of work attitudes and behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), prior work has not examined the factors which predict the development of OI amongst service employees, and examined its subsequent influence on work engagement and citizenship behavior. This is in spite of the fact that recent meta-analytical work found strong evidence that organizational identification, is a unique construct distinguishable from other attitudinal constructs, that acts as a positive influence on other attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment, job satisfaction) and behaviors (e.g. extra-role performance) (Lee, Park, & Koo, 2015).

Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by examining the role of OI in the development of work engagement and citizenship behavior among service employees (see Fig. 1). Using social identity theory, or more specifically the group engagement model, which specifies the factors that may enhance organizational identification (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2003), we investigate whether both internal and external sources (i.e., respect and pride) enhance employees' OI. We also investigate the mediating role played by OI on the relationships between pride and respect and the work outcomes of work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1. Organizational identification and group engagement model

Organizational identification (OI) is one of the most widely studied constructs in organizational behavior research. OI has been defined as an individual's "perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organization" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). Individuals with high levels of OI have typically linked their organizational membership to their self-concept, either cognitively (e.g. internalizing organizational values), emotionally (e.g. pride in being part of the organization), or both (Riketta, 2005),

and as a result tend to act with the interests and goals of the organization in mind. In line with such assertions OI has been found to lead to positive work attitudes and behaviors amongst employees including intrinsic motivation, job performance, job satisfaction, and retention (Lee et al., 2015; Riketta, 2005). OI is likely to be dependent upon the external reputation of the organization, in such a way that individuals are more likely to identify with the organization when the organization has a positive reputation in the eyes of non-organizational members. When the organization performs well, identification with the organization on the part of the employee is likely to have positive effects on their self-concept and intrinsic motivation. In contrast, OI can be a liability when the organization has a negative external reputation. This is likely to reduce the psychological bond between the employee and the organization, and have a negative impact on their self-concept and intrinsic motivation (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000).

Traditionally, social identity theory suggests that identification exists when people are cognitively aware that they are part of a group and that the group membership is emotionally significant to them (Tajfel, 1974). By doing so, people strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Advancing the social identity theory, Tyler and Blader (2000) proposed the group engagement model, which suggests that a positive social identity does not purely derive from the comparison an individual makes between the group they belong to and other groups, but also by how one is evaluated by others in the group (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003). While extant research has mainly focused on the cognitive component of social identity, the evaluative component has not attracted much research attention (Blader & Tyler, 2009). The evaluative component refers to the value attached to the membership of the group (Tajfel, 1978a,b), which according to group engagement model is comprised of two dimensions: pride and respect, (Tyler & Blader, 2003). Pride refers to the extent to which an individual feels that their group (in this case the organization) is evaluated positively by outgroups (in this case individuals from outside the organization). In contrast, respect refers to the extent to which an individual feels that other members of the group (in this case members of the same organization) accord them a positive status in the group (Tyler & Blader, 2003).

2.2. Respect, pride, and organizational identification (OI)

The group engagement model proposes that the development of OI depends on both internal (i.e., respect) and external (i.e., pride)

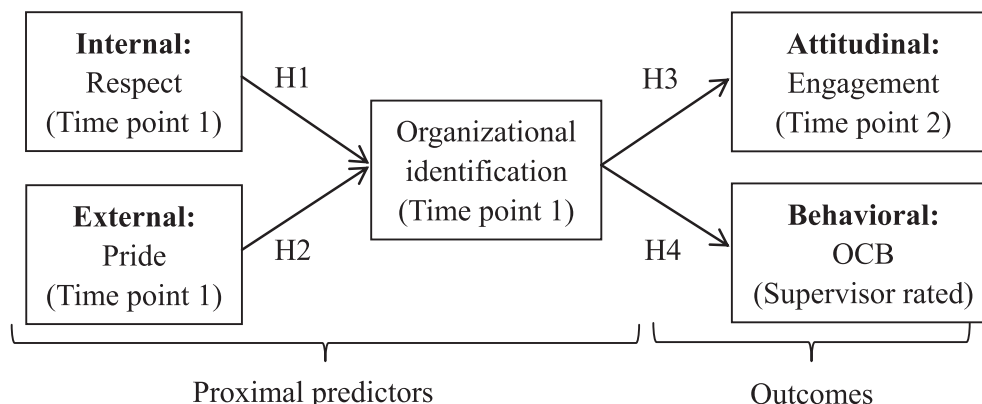


Fig. 1. Theoretical model.

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